

What Can I Do to Protect Myself from West Nile Virus?

- ◆ Use insect repellent on your skin and clothes.
- ◆ When possible, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants when you are outdoors.
- ◆ Place mosquito netting over infants in carriers when they are outdoors.
- ◆ Consider staying indoors at dawn, dusk, and in the early evening, which are peak mosquito biting times.
- ◆ Install or repair window and door screens so that mosquitoes cannot get indoors.
- ◆ Help reduce the number of mosquitoes outdoors where you work or play by draining sources of standing water. This will help reduce the number of places mosquitoes can lay their eggs and breed.



Resources

For more information about DEET, West Nile virus and pets, and updated West Nile virus status in Maine visit

www.MainePublicHealth.org

or call the

Bureau of Health,
Maine Department of Human Services at
207-287-5301.

To report a dead bird, visit
the website or call
1-888-697-5846.

June 2003

State of Maine
Department of Human Services
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine
04333-0011



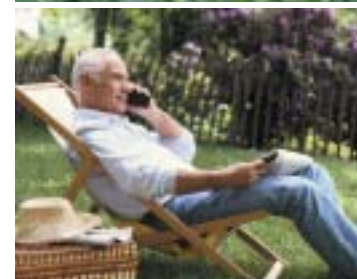
John Elias Baldacci
Governor

Mosquitoes.



West Nile Virus.

YOU CAN PROTECT YOURSELF.





**People more than 50 years
old are at highest risk of
serious illness from
West Nile virus.**

What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus is carried by mosquitoes, and can cause a disease called encephalitis (swelling of the brain). West Nile virus was discovered in the United States in 1999. Since then it has spread to several states, including Maine.

How Do People Get Infected with West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus is spread by the bite of infected mosquitoes. Even in areas where the virus is present, very few mosquitoes are infected. You cannot get West Nile virus by touching or being near an infected person.

How Serious is West Nile Virus Infection?

Most people infected with West Nile virus do not become ill. However, in a small number of cases, West Nile virus can cause serious illness or even death. People over 50 years old are at highest risk for serious illness from West Nile virus infection.

What Are the Symptoms of West Nile Virus Infection?

Mild cases of West Nile virus infection may include a slight fever and/or headache. More severe infections can cause disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, and paralysis.

What Insect Repellent Should I Use to Avoid Mosquito Bites?

The most effective repellents contain DEET. Most repellents available in stores are labeled with the chemical name for DEET. Look for N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or sometimes N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide.

Repellents with 23.8% DEET provide an average of 5 hours of protection from mosquito bites. Products with more than 50% DEET are usually NOT necessary.

For children aged 2-12 years, use repellents with 10% or less DEET. It is important to use DEET properly. Be sure to follow the instructions on the repellent label.

How Do I Know if Mosquitoes in My Area Have West Nile Virus?

West Nile virus has been found in Maine, and it is best to protect yourself from frequent mosquito bites. Fortunately, even in areas where the virus is present, very few mosquitoes are infected.

In many situations, the first sign of West Nile virus in an area has been the discovery of dead birds (especially crows) that have been infected by mosquitoes. To help the Department of Human Services track West Nile virus in Maine, please report dead crows, blue jays and ravens by calling 1-888-697-5846.